

# ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

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## Texan Ministers Call Segregation Wrong

(Dallas, Texas) - Three hundred white Protestant ministers in Dallas, Texas, have urged school boards to make desegregation plans public "as soon as possible", and have called enforced segregation "morally and spiritually wrong". Methodist Bishop William C. Martin, spokesman for the group, said the 300 signers were a majority of the white Protestant clergy in the Dallas area.

The ministers asked that law and order be kept "as Dallas faces desegregation of its public schools", and urged churches, service clubs, newspapers, radio and television stations and community organisations to "join together in seeking actively to promote the spirit of harmony and peace among all people".

E.P.S., Geneva

## Dr. Blake Sends Message to Parents of Slain Korean Student

(Philadelphia) - Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, has expressed his regret at the "Christian failure" that resulted in the death last month of a 26-year-old Korean exchange student studying in Philadelphia. Mr. In Ho Oh, a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, was killed on the street without reason by a gang of eleven teen-age boys.

Dr. Blake, who is also a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, sent a message to the boy's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ki



Byung Oh, saying that "all of us feel a deep sense of responsibility for our failures as Christians to deal adequately with the evils that beset our society". The parents are active members of a Presbyterian USA church in Pusan. They have asked clemency for the youths rounded up for the murder and have set up, "in a Christian spirit", an educational fund to help the gang leaders.

"We are humbled by the Christian spirit you have demonstrated in asking that leniency be granted your son's slayers," Dr. Blake wrote. "Your willingness to go the second mile has made its impact upon millions of Americans."

E.P.S., Geneva

### Stiffer Legal Measures Against Civil Marriages in Spain

(Madrid) - The Spanish Civil Code has been modified to make it compulsory for non-Roman Catholics to prove they do not belong to the Roman Catholic Church.

The insertion of this "burden of proof" into the law itself codifies recent administrative regulations, which demanded proof of non-Catholic status and acceptance of the evidence by the local bishop before a civil marriage licence could be issued.

Recent practice under the regulations that were in force before the new legal measure indicates that Roman Catholics, or people baptised as Roman Catholics, are formally excommunicated by the local bishop if they become parties to a civil marriage. People who act as "witnesses" in furnishing proof of the non-Roman Catholic belief of parties to a civil marriage have also been excommunicated in some cases. It is not yet clear whether the evidence of Protestant ministers, or of Protestants not baptised in the Roman Catholic Church, will be accepted by the courts as sufficient proof that a party to a civil marriage is a non-Roman Catholic.

E.P.S., Geneva

### University Honours Christian Century

(Columbia, Missouri) - "The Christian Century", leading American undenominational weekly publication, has received one of five University of Missouri Honour Awards for distinguished service in journalism. The award recognised the magazine for its "half century of service in reviewing the significant events of the world and commenting wisely upon them".

Speaking at the university's Journalism Week, "Century" editor Harold E. Fey said it was "high time" that the American secular press "should venture to report and evaluate religion in depth". A responsible press, Dr. Fey said, should challenge the many forms of "vulgarisation of religion". These include "the peace of mind cult, the 'Man Upstairs' kind of sentimentality, the nationalistic notion that God is Uncle Sam in a different set of whiskers, the superstition-mongers, the psychologisers and the mass revivalists". Dr. Fey added: "They include the men who try to fasten a Christopher medal to a space missile, as well as the men who urge soldiers to carry New Testaments over their hearts, not because they read them, but because they may magically stop a bullet."

The press has, in part, created "the current American fashion of religiosity", which "should be ventilated by the press", he said. "This religiosity is the greatest single peril faced by valid religion. It spreads a thin veneer of piety over millions whose church membership is nothing more than social conformity."

E.P.S., Geneva



Finnish Lutherans and Orthodox Confer

(Helsinki) - A conference of Lutheran and Orthodox theologians and laymen was held during the second week of May at the Finnish Church Training Institute at Järvenpää. Aimed at expressing "the new sense of mutual responsibility" felt by both national churches, the meeting was one in a series held annually since 1954. Dr. H.H. Wolf, director of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland, and Mr. John Lawrence, editor of Britain's "Frontier", took part in the sessions, which were also addressed by Finnish Lutheran Bishop Eino Sormunen and the Finnish Orthodox priest Father D. Tärvasaho.

A Russian delegation was invited to take part, but did not arrive.

The Ecumenical Institute of Bossey sponsored the meeting with the Järvenpää Institute. It was followed by a consultation on practical problems confronting the two churches, arranged by the Finnish Ecumenical Council.

Mixed marriages between Lutherans and Orthodox, especially in the East of Finland, have involved 85% of the Orthodox population in some districts. A report from the consultation making suggestions about pastoral follow-up in these cases will be sent to all local congregations. The Finnish Lutheran Church has about 4,000,000 members and the Orthodox about 76,000.

The consultation also recommended to the Finnish government's board of education that school text books in future should include teaching about each church that is approved by the church authorities.

Participants described the consultation's decisions as "a precedent for a new kind of ecumenical action in Finland".

E.P.S., Geneva

Java "Gereformeerde" Congregations to Join Indonesian Church

(Djakarta) - A special synod of the Gereformeerde (Christian Reformed) Churches of Indonesia has decided to approve the future affiliation of its congregations in Bandung and Surabaya with the indigenous Church of Central Java, itself a product of Gereformeerde missionary activity.

The Gereformeerde Churches in Indonesia have a largely European membership. Last year they joined the World Council of Churches, though their mother church in the Netherlands has not done so. They were requested subsequently by the Irish Evangelical Church to revise their decision to join, but have now replied to the Irish church that they have no intention of "watering down" their own beliefs, but regard it as a "call" to make their voice heard within the WCC.

The synod decided not to join the World Presbyterian Alliance in view of other international commitments and responsibilities, but asked to maintain contact with it.

E.P.S., Geneva

10,000 US Methodist Women Attend National Assembly

(St. Louis) - Two speakers at the Assembly of Methodist women, held early in May at St. Louis, Missouri, underscored the need for Christians to face up to the spiritual, technical, economic and political problems of the new space and nuclear age. They were Dr. Chandran Devanesan of Madras Christian College, Tambaram, India, and Dr. Kenneth M. Maxwell of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.



Dr. Devanesan told the 10,000 women attending the Fifth Quadrennial National Assembly of the Methodist Woman's Society of Christian Service that there is a need for "critical self-examination" in the face of racist, Communist and nationalist tendencies and the renaissance of old religions. "Racism", he said, "is the most important of the powerful forces arrayed against the Church. The power exercised by white races over the coloured in the past four hundred years left a terrible legacy of racial tensions. Never, perhaps, in the history of the world has racism played such a divisive role as today. In many parts of Asia the Christian Church is rejected as the exclusive property of the white races and Christ is seen as a white tribal god - a blond-haired nordic or a blue-eyed Anglo-Saxon."

Dr. Maxwell, who directs the NCC's Department of International Affairs, told the women that "Christians have a special responsibility in the new age, and we in the United States should be at the forefront of revolutions for human values in our world. There is a vast need in our own foreign policy, while not neglecting the military aspects, to emphasize the constructive things which make for peace."

In closing sessions of their week-long meeting, the women pledged \$7,970,000 for their 1959 missionary work in the United States and thirty-two countries overseas. The total was more than a million dollars higher than the amount pledged four years ago. There are 1,805,599 WSCS members, organised into 31,014 local church societies. The women support 514 missionaries as well as hundreds of national church workers in foreign fields and 2,000 deaconesses and other workers in home fields. E.P.S., Geneva

#### Hungarian Council Asks for World Christian Synod

(Budapest) - At its meeting last month, the Hungarian Ecumenical Council considered the relations between the Hungarian churches and the ecumenical movement and went on record as favouring a Czechoslovakian proposal for establishing a Christian world synod.

The Hungarian council proposed that the World Council of Churches call a meeting of representatives to discuss plans for setting up a world synod that would take decisions on international problems, especially regarding atomic warfare and armament.

The World Council was also asked to urge member churches to appeal to their member governments to stop atomic bomb tests and to prevent other nations from staging atomic tests "as a further way of promoting international peace".

Chairman of the conference was Bishop Lajos Vető. Others present included Bishop Elémer Györy and Bishop Lajos Daranyi of the Reformed Church, Dr. Tibor Bartha, Dr. Laszlo Szabo, president of the Baptist Church in Hungary, and Dr. Gyula Muraközy, general secretary of the Hungarian Ecumenical Council.

#### UN Honours First Refugee Commissioner

(Geneva) - A plaque honouring the first United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Dr. G.J. van Heuven Goedhart, has been unveiled in the UN Hall of Fame in Geneva.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Edgar H.S. Chandler, associate director of the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches, said that Dr. van Heuven Goedhart, who died in 1956, is remembered "as a great champion of refugees, whose voice echoed and re-echoed through the halls of the United Nations and the chancelleries of the world. But we also



remember him as one who remained close to the refugees themselves. In the name of humanity and in the name of God, we would make our tribute by dedicating ourselves again to the cause of homeless brethren in need."

UN General Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld and Dr. August R. Lindt, present UN High Commissioner for Refugees, sent messages from the United States.

E.P.S., Geneva

#### The United Arab Republic and Free Education

(Cairo) - According to an official news bulletin from Cairo, the United Arab Republic is about to issue a new law concerning free education. The Catholic and Protestant schools and colleges which still exist in Syria and Egypt would be particularly affected by this measure.

The new law, the newspapers report, stipulates that no foreign private school can be opened unless it is founded and directed by persons of Arab nationality. For the moment private schools are not permitted to increase their enrolment.

Under a law passed in 1956, students must receive religious instruction in their own faith at the school which they attend, and this instruction must be given by teachers approved by the government (see EPS No. 23, 1956).

E.P.S., Geneva

#### British Bible Society Cuts Production

(London) - For the first time in its history, the British and Foreign Bible Society has had to cut its production of publications because of "financial stringency".

Speaking at the society's annual meeting in London, Dr. William J. Platt, general secretary, said the agency had to turn down requests which would have cost nearly \$2,800,000 to produce. However, despite increasing costs, the society distributed more than ten million Scriptures in 1957 as compared with six million in 1950. During the first six months of 1957 Dr. Platt said the agency printed a million complete Bibles, a job that would have taken about twelve months two years ago.

E.P.S., Geneva

#### "Upper Room" to Honour Dr. Cavert

(Nashville, Tennessee) - Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, who retired in January as executive secretary in the US for the World Council of Churches, will receive the 1958 "Upper Room" citation for leadership in world Christian fellowship.

The annual award, which will be presented on September 25 in New York, is given by "The Upper Room", monthly devotional guide published by the Methodist Church and distributed in twenty-nine languages.

E.P.S., Geneva

#### Roman Catholic Ecumenist Dies in Belgium

(Chevetogne, Belgium) - Dom Clement Lialine of the Benedictine Abbey of Chevetogne, in Belgium, died on April 26, at the age of 56. He was for many years active as an interpreter of Russian Orthodoxy in Roman Catholic circles, and maintained close contact with ecumenical leaders of many confessions. Many of Dom Lialine's publications dealt at length with the ecclesiology of the World Council of Churches.

E.P.S., Geneva



### World YWCA Issues New Publication

(Geneva) - The second edition of a new publication, "The YWCA in Action", just issued in Geneva by the World YWCA, deals with Y programmes and projects in the field of social and international responsibility.

The May issue, the first in a series of three on "The YWCA Serves the Working Women", deals with day-care service for children. Two later issues will be devoted to related questions, and will give practical suggestions for establishing community services for working women. At the same time, the series is serving as preparatory material for a special consultation on a Christian approach to women's questions scheduled to be held by the World YWCA prior to its 1959 World Council meeting in Mexico.

As a result of a survey to gather material for the current issue, the World YWCA presented a statement at the twelfth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in Geneva last month, pointing out the need for a continuing concern for maintaining good standards in both public and private child care agencies.

The first issue of "The YWCA in Action", published in January, was a guide to study and discussion on aspects of juvenile delinquency and other social problems, as related to the YWCA programme. E.P.S., Geneva

### US, Dutch Church Groups Speak on Nuclear Arms Testing

Two groups, United Church Women in the United States, and the General Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerk (The Christian Reformed Church) in the Netherlands, have made recent statements on nuclear arms testing and modern warfare.

In a meeting in Oklahoma City, the 150-member board of managers of United Church Women has called on the United States government to cease testing nuclear weapons for a trial period as "a first step" in seeking the reduction of armaments. The statement of the policy-making board was based on a declaration made last summer by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at its meeting in New Haven, Conn.

At the same time, the women said US policies on mutual trade and aid programmes need to be expanded, with special emphasis on the needs of newly-developing world areas. The board members, who represent about ten million United States church women, also spoke out on the crisis in education and the current emphasis on science. Women were urged to work for more and better schools "to develop the whole personality under a balanced curriculum".

On the other hand, the synod of the Dutch church has passed a statement saying that modern methods of warfare do not change the duty of government authorities to defend justice by the use of arms. The synod pointed out that while the question of using nuclear weapons and the sacrificing of human lives to maintain justice was a serious one, its decision remained the same. The statement said that the synod purposely did not send a message to the Dutch government condemning nuclear weapons, but added that it regards it as the church's duty to pray for those in authority and "through its witness and action to promote international peace based on law and justice". E.P.S., Geneva



Italian Methodists To Cooperate Fully with Waldensians

(Rome) - The annual synod of the Methodist Church in Italy has unanimously endorsed the carrying out of a plan to "integrate" pastoral work and evangelism in local areas with parallel activities of the Waldensian Church in the same fields.

The plan, worked out last year after it had been decided not to proceed with proposals for organic union, will avoid overlapping. It is based on a recognition of the validity of both churches' ministries and on full intercommunion, and will mean that local pastors can serve both Methodists and Waldensians.

Reports at the synod indicated growth in membership and in contributions in the seven circuits of the Methodist Church in Italy, with a total of 55 local churches. Ninety-eight former Roman Catholics were reported to have become Methodists. A steady progress toward the goal of financial self-support was reported.

A resolution of the synod condemned experiments with nuclear weapons and called for more intensive work for peace.

The new general superintendent of the church, the Rev. Mario Sbaffi, presided over the synod, which welcomed for the first time a three-man delegation from the Waldensian synod led by Moderator Achille Deodato, and thanked retiring superintendent Emanuele Sbaffi after 12 years' service. Methodist Bishop Friedrich Wunderlich of Germany also attended.

E.P.S., Geneva

Asians Urge Study of Family Life

(Chiangmai, Thailand) - Twenty representatives of Christian churches in eleven East Asian countries have urged the churches in their countries to prepare themselves "to meet the crisis" that they believe the impact of industrialisation is going to create for family solidarity.

Sending a message to the churches at the close of a three-month training institute on Christian Family Life, the representatives said: "In East Asia, and elsewhere, the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation has not yet reached its peak, and the coming threat to family solidarity is not yet fully comprehended. We earnestly call upon the younger churches in these areas not to regard this situation with complacency, but to prepare themselves with all diligence to meet the crisis which we feel is assuredly coming."

The message also asked the churches to make a "careful and thorough study of the whole subject, and to train Christian pastors and lay leaders to give enlightened help and wise guidance in this field to the Christian community".

The institute was led by Dr. David and Dr. Vera Mace, field consultants in home and family life for the International Missionary Council. They are holding a series of institutes throughout Asia (see EPS No. 3).

E.P.S., Geneva

In Brief

The first televised Protestant service on the Flemish-speaking TV system in Belgium was transmitted from the chapel of the Protestant Churches' Pavilion at the Brussels World Fair on May 11. Introduced by a short documentary survey of the pavilion as a whole, the programme was devised and presented by Pastor C.M. de Vries of the ecumenical broadcasting service in the Netherlands. Pastor André Pieters, of the Methodist Church in Belgium, preached. The service was led by Pastor Pieter Fagel of the Netherlands Reformed Church in Brussels.



